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ABSTRACT

A Piagetian analysis of social development focuses on the changes in children's social concepts and the social factors which facilitate these changes. Piaget's early analysis of children's language into a 3-stage transition from egocentrism to fully socialized speech led to more general study of social behavior. Observations of children playing at various ages facilitated the study of developmental changes in behavior with respect to rules, and changes in ideas about rules. The observed development from blind allegiance to the rule to concern for cooperative agreement was seen as the basis of the whole social-moral developmental process. Discussion of social development is constantly related to the total ongoing intellectual development, so that social interactions are interpreted in terms of their positive contributions to cognitive processes. Literature is reviewed concerning relationships between social development and preschool experience. To counteract the problems in interpreting these studies (permanence of gains, lack of adequate controls), a detailed review of research which analyzed the effects of specific social variables is presented. Focus is on studies of dominative-integrative behavior, training in independent problem solving through social reinforcement, social learning by imitation, and the use of the whole peer group to promote social development. (DP)

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# THE EARLY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN:

# IMPLICATIONS FOR A PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

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A good way of beginning almost any talk, I think, is to turn the title into a question. It's always a good idea to have the questions before you get the answers.

What is social development ? What is its nature ? What kinds of changes does social development involve ? What brings these changes about ? How is " social"development related to "intellectual" development and "emotional" development ? In short, what do psychologists know about the processes that convert the child from an a-social creature into a social one ?

Some of the most stimulating answers to these questions have come from the work of the great Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget. Piaget's work on the purely logical aspects of children's thinking is beginning to get some attention in the American press, but his ideas about socialization have not yet received similar notice.

Piaget began his fascinating inquiry into the social growth of the child by listening to how children talk when they play together. What, he wondered, does a child's use of language in such a situation tell us about his social development ?

Piaget found, in studying the conversations of scores of Swiss children from four to seven, that the child's social speech could be divided into three stages, through which all children appeared to pass.

The first stage was egocentric speech. This was speech which lacked a communicative aim. The presence of another child did serve as a stimulus

of speech. But the speaking child made no attempt to consider the listening child's viewpoint. There was no effort to make the communication understandable. The speaking child didn't even make sure that the other child was listening. Moreover, child B would not seem to hear or respond to A's communication. Instead, B would say something unrelated to what A had said, and the talking would continue in this fashion.

These are really non-conversations. Piaget called them "collective monologues."

Stage two was a transitional stage. There was still some egocentric speech, but primitive quarreling and other simple verbal interactions did occur. Quarreling represents a genuine social interaction, because it requires responding to what the other child says.

At stage three, around age six or seven, speech was fully socialized. The children consistently cooperated on a verbal plane -- i.e., each child gave sustained attention and appropriate responses to the statements of the other. This made it possible to conduct a genuine discussion of a topic. When children argued, they sought to convince each other by backing up their statements with reasons.

Language, then, gradually takes on a communicative function in children's play. That's one social change. And you can infer something about the child's social-intellectual functioning in general from how he uses language in such situations. If his speech is more like a monologue than a communication, you can deduce that he doesn't take the perspective of the other child. He can't place himself in the role of the listener, can't put himself in the other child's intellectual shoes. This is what Piaget means by egocentrism -- a very central concept in his theory of child development. The young child is a prisoner of his own point of view, and he doesn't even recognize it

as being a point of view.

Taking his cue from Piaget, another investigator by the name of Lerner devised a very simple way of demonstrating how childish egocentrism operates in a specific social situation. Lerner read a story to children of different ages about a boy in school named Frank. Frank was lazy. To make him work harder, the teacher forbade his classmates to play with him or to help him with his work. But one boy, Paul, broke the teacher's rule because he still wanted to help Frank out.

Lerner then asked the child, "What do you think about Paul ? Was he right or wrong for helping Frank ? Why ?" Then comes the most interesting part of the interview. After the child said what he thought, Lerner asked him, "What does the teacher think ? What does Paul (the boy who helped) think ? What does Frank think ? What does Paul's mother think ?"etc.

What does the young subject in Lerner's experiment say ? The 6-year-old answers that everyone thinks exactly the same as he does. If he thought Paul was bad for helping Frank, so does everybody else, including Frank, and for exactly the same reasons. Lerner's older subjects, on the other hand, recognized that there would be more than one perspective on the situation. They had emerged from egocentrism.

A second, very clever way that Piaget used to study children's social development was to observe Swiss children of different ages playing a game of marbles. He had two specific aims. The first was to study the developmental changes in the child's behavior with respect to the rules of the game; the second was to learn something about the development of children's ideas about rules -- what they thought about them.

Before age three, Piaget found, the child simply uses marbles as free play materials. There is no attempt to conform to any kind of a rule. At the most, the child develops private play rituals ("motor rules").

an awareness of the rules of the game and expressed a desire to play like the older children. In their actual behavior, however, they unwittingly broke the rules at every turn. Moreoever, their play was really parallel rather than cooperative. Like the children engaging in collective monologues, they didn't really interact. They didn't watch each other, and nobody tried to win. Each child played for himself, and Piaget concluded that the game of marbles was for these children still more of a "motor pleasure" than a social one.

What did children at this behavioral stage think about rules ? What was their concept of a rule ? To find out, Piaget asked them three simple questions : How did rules begin ? Have the rules always been the same as they are now ? Can the rules be changed ?

The responses to these questions were very interesting. Even though the children regularly violated the rules when they played (apparently without awareness), they said that one must never break a rule and that rules cannot be changed. They also insisted that the rules have always been as they were then, and that they came from their fathers, or from the community elders, or from God -- from some form of external authority.

Here is an example of an exchange between Piaget and a boy at this stage (5 years old):

Piaget: Did people always play like this ?
Ben: Yes.
Piaget: Why ?
Ben: Cause you can't play any other way.
Piaget: Couldn't you make up a different game ?
Ben: Yes...(makes up a game using a triangle to put the marbles in rather than a square). But it wouldn't be fair. The others wouldn't play.
Piaget: If all the children played that way, would it be fair then ?
Ben: No.
Piaget: Why not ?
Ben: Because it isn't a square.

Piaget asked another boy, Roy, age 6, if it would be fair to change the game so that little boys could shoot from closer up than big boys.

Roy said no, it wouldn't be fair.

Piaget: Why not ?
Roy: Because God would make the little boy's shot not reach the marbles and the big boy's shot would reach them.

At this stage, then, the existing rules are sacred; they even have divine support.

The next major change in the child's behavior and thinking began to emerge at around 7 or 8. At this stage of development, the children consistently conformed to the rules in their conduct. They played to win--and not merely to win, but to compete with their playmates while observing common rules. The pleasure of the game, Piaget concluded, was now social. Moreover, the children at this developmental level sometimes engaged in group revision of the rules.

The behavioral changes were accompanied by dramatic changes in the children's conception of rules. They no longer viewed them as unchangeable absolutes handed down by some superior authority. They instead saw the rules of the game as a code of action which is freely decided upon by the members of the group. The purpose of the rules is to make the group activity possible. The child now considers the rules worthy of respect because they are based upon the free mutual consent of the participants. Finally, the rules can be changed, as long as the new ones are mutually agreed upon and serve the common interest.

Contrast the following interview with a boy of 9 with the earlier interview with the 5-year-old who regarded rules as hallowed absolutes:

Piaget: How did rules begin?
Ross: Some boys came to an agreement among themselves and made them up.
Piaget: Could you invent a new rule ?
Ross: Oh, yes.
Piaget: Would it be fair ?
Ross: If everyone agreed to play that way, it would be fair.
Piaget: Just as fair as the old rule ?
Ross; Just as fair.

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A given rule is no longer sacred to the child. What is sacred is a method of arriving at rules: free cooperation among individuals on an equal-to-equal basis.

Piaget sees the same shift -- from blind allegiance to rules in themselves to a concern for cooperative agreement -- as characterizing the whole process of the child's social-moral development. First Piaget and then many researchers after him have revealed some marked changes in children's moral thought as they grow older. There seem, in fact, to be two distinct moralities in childhood, two broad successive stages in moral development. The first is a morality of constraint, based on a unilateral respect for authority. The second is a morality of cooperation, based upon mutual respect among peers.

The young child, under age 7, believes that being good is simply obeying the dictates of adult authority. The older child believes that good behavior is treating others with the respect that he desires for himself. What is wrong, for the older child, is whatever undermines the principle of cooperation. A lie, for example, is judged to be bad because it destroys mutual trust.

The young child believes that rules must be always be obeyed regardless of circumstances. The older child will often approve of breaking a rule if some higher good is thereby served. It's all right, for example, to steal bread from a store for a poor and hungry friend.

The young child ignores motives or intentions in evaluating a person's responsibility for an action, and focuses on the external consequences of the act or simply the extent to which it conformed to the established rule. A boy who breaks 8 cups while helping his mother with the dishes is judged naughtier than a boy who breaks one cup while stealing some jam. The older child reverses the criteria and gives primary consideration to a person's intentions in evaluating his behavior.

The young child equates justice, the distribution of rewards and punishments, with whatever the adult says and does, and he is a firm believer in severe punishment as a way of atoning for an offense. The older child's view of justice insists that all be treated equally and that punishment, when administered, should be aimed at restoring normal social relations by making the transgressor aware of how he has broken a social bond.

What brings all these changes about ? Piaget's answer: the child's experience of social interaction on a basis of mutual respect and equality. Most commonly, Piaget believes, the child experiences such respect and equality with his playmates -- his social peers. This kind of interaction teaches him several things:

First of all, it teaches him that different points of view exist, and this makes him aware of his own perspective, his own thinking. Piaget states that "social life is necessary if the child is to become conscious of his own mind." Egocentrism begins to break down. Being aware of another's point of view also inclines the child to consider intentions when judging the acts of others.

Secondly, social interaction with his peers teaches the child the necessity of making mutual accommodations to differences in points of view, differences in needs, differences in desires. The child learns that this kind of mutual consideration is essential to getting along. His experience of such mutual respect among equals leads him to view a spirit of cooperation as the basis of social relationships, rather than authority-supported rules. In the context of this new understanding, the child sees specific moral rules against lying, stealing, aggression, etc. as all being expressions of the same basic social requirement: reciprocal respect. When the child develops this new concept of morality as a system of common rights and obligations,

he has reached what Piaget calls the stage of moral autonomy. External pressure is no longer required to motivate moral behavior, and he judges his own behavior and that of others according to the internalized ideal of cooperation. An understanding of morality's function in social relationships now motivates his adherence to social rules.

Obviously, as anyone who has had contact with children knows, not every child reaches the level of moral maturity which I've just described. You can reasonably argue that most adults never achieve full moral autonomy. Piaget points out that many factors can retard or arrest the process of moral growth. A high degree of adult authoritarianism in the home or school is one such factor; strong societal pressures to rigidly conform to custom and the written law is another. It's best, Piaget says, to regard complete moral autonomy in thought and action as an ideal, toward which development tends under favorable conditions but which is never completely achieved.

What is especially valuable about Piaget's discussion of moral development is that he constantly relates changes in the child's moral judgment to his total cognitive or intellectual development. No other theorist does this. Piaget speaks repeatedly of the parallelism between the two. The young child's rigid egocentric moral judgments (such as his failure to consider motives) are a product of a general intellectual egocentrism -- a general failure to differentiate between himself and his environment, a general failure to understand the psychological origin and nature of assertions about reality. He doesn't treat a belief as an hypothesis to be verified. He has no concept of an idea or "truth" as adults understand it.

The child's first progress toward logical and social maturity comes when adults teach him that some statements are true and others are not, just as they teach him that some behaviors are good and others are bad. The young

does not yet understand the basis for the distinction, but he has at least learned that a distinction exists.

From cooperation with other children the child learns much more. Cooperative interaction teaches him that the search for truth is a social endeavor. It requires adherence to certain logical norms -- just as other kinds of social activity demand adherence to certain moral norms. The child learns that often he must justify by argument what he says to other children. Frequently, he finds that other children demand that he verify his statements to them -- he must show that he is right. He learns also that he must be reasonably consistent in what he says; he can't go around contradicting himself -- which very young children have a habit of doing.

The child has to learn all of these things -- justification, verification, and consistency -- in order to intellectually communicate with other children and have his statements accepted and understood. Intellectual activity, in other words, also involves following rules. This is why Piaget says that logic is really the morality of thought. As the child develops, his thinking in general becomes socialized.

In addition to the rules of the intellectual game, cooperation teaches the child a general intellectual lesson of great import. It teaches him that discussion among equals is essential to arriving at truth, just as interchange among equals is essential to arriving at mutually acceptable ways of regulating social conduct. Discussion among equals is also necessary, in Piaget's view, for the child's development of an ability to critically evaluate both moral rules and intellectual assertions about reality.

These are the key concepts in Piaget's theory of social development. Piaget has not focused his social research on pre-schoolers, however, since his verbal interview technique doesn't work very well with children under 5.

He has also not made any systematic efforts to structure the child's social environment in ways that will promote progress toward moral maturity. But his concepts and the cognitive approach which he exemplifies can be and have been applied to the child's social behavior at any developmental level.

The cognitive approach to social learning has sought to break down the traditional conceptual dichotomy between social and intellectual development. Social development is viewed as a special case of learning in general. Social development is the development of concepts that enable the child to cope with the interpersonal part of his world, to handle the stimuli from his social environment, to anticipate and interpret the behaviors of other people. Part of this process is developing a way of viewing himself in relationship to other people -- developing a social self-concept.

Cognitive theory also talks about social development as learning to play certain roles in different social situations. Role-playing requires the child to learn what behaviors other people expect of him and how to accommodate to those expectations. All of this helps to reduce the uncertainty of social life for the child and give him greater control over social events.

Most generally, a cognitive viewpoint views social development as the process by which the child's social experience gives rise to certain ways of thinking about other people. These understandings or concepts about his social world in turn govern the child's subsequent social behavior.

What about the research which has focused on the social development of pre-schoolers ? Naturalistic studies of the peer behavior of young children -- studies which do not attempt in any way to control or alter the child's experience -- have found that the frequency of <u>all</u> forms of social interaction, desirable and undesirable, increases with age during the pre-school years. A second finding is that the proportion of acceptable to unacceptable

behaviors also increases-- older children relying more heavily than younger ones on verbal interaction rather than physical force to secure goals. This is what we'd expect -- greater social experience should lead to greater reliance upon non-aggressive methods of interaction.

There have also been a considerable number of studies which have sought to control the child's social experience. The nursery school studies fall into this category. The nursery school usually constitutes an enrichment of social experience for the child. It often provides the child with his first contact with groups of peers, in which case it marks the beginning of peer influence.

The best nursery school studies, from a methodological standpoint, are those that have used a control group as well as an experimental group. One group of children gets the nursery school experience; a second, equivalent group of children from a comparable background, does not. A control group is necessary if the investigator wants to be able to attribute social growth to the nursery school situation rather than to experience outside the nursery school in the child's normal social environment.

Most of the nursery school investigations have found greater social gains for the nursery school group. The nature of the gains reported depends on what behaviors the investigator chose to measure social development -- and this varies widely. Taken together, the studies have found that the nursery schoolers are more socially outgoing than the controls; they show greater correction of socially undesirable habits regarding cleanliness, eating, elimination, etc.; and the nursery schoolers are also more self-reliant and independent of adults. Nursery-schoolers also show less fear of strangers, less avoidance of other children, and less anxiety in non-home situations. This last finding of a general reduction of social fears suggests that experience with the social novelty of nursery school develops cognitive skills that

the child can use to cope with other kinds of novel social situations.

There are some problems, however, in interpreting the findings of the nursery school studies. One is that little is known about the permanency of nursery school gains. Do non-nursery school children catch up with the nursery schoolers ? Or, if the nursery school subjects were at the outset retarded in their social development -- as they often are -- and the nursery school accelerates their development, what happens afterward ? Do they once again fall behind ? Under what conditions do the gains hold up over time ? Under what circumstances do they disappear ? These kinds of questions can be answered only by longitudinal follow-ups of the nursery school subjects, and any research program on pre-schoolers should plan to include such follow-ups.

A second problem with many of the nursery school studies is that they don't provide enough control over the child's social experience within the nursery situation. The different kinds of social interaction that the child experiences are not separated and controlled. This makes the effects of the nursery school difficult to analyze. When social gains are found, it is often impossible to say just what, specifically, produced them.

Some investigations have tried to zero in on specific social variables and analyze their effects. I'd like to briefly discuss a few such efforts.

One of these was conducted by a psychologist by the name of Anderson. Anderson was interested in how the pre-school child responds to conflict over goals in a face-to-face situation with another child. This is a central problem in social development: how the child learns to handle conflict with others. Anderson's study included two experimental groups. One was a nursery school group of intellectually advanced children from advantaged homes. The other consisted of children enrolled in an orphanage nursery school.

Children were taken in pairs to a testing room, where there was a sandbox and several toys. The experimenter simply said, "Here are some toys for you to play with until I come back and get you." The children were observed at play for 5 minutes through a one-way window.

Anderson observed two very different patterns of reaction to conflict over how the play materials were to be used:

One pattern he called dominative behavior. This was goal-seeking without any regard for the desires or interests of the other child involved. Typical dominative behaviors included commands, criticism, threats, and physical seizure of the toys. Dominative response to conflict was also rigid; alternative courses of action were not considered by the dominative child.

The second pattern of behavior Anderson called integrative. This was more flexible. The child taking an integrative approach to conflict considered alternative solutions to the problem. His goal-seeking included consideration of the interests and opinions of the other child. The integrative child made an active effort to find a solution satisfying to his companion as well as to himself. Typical integrative behaviors were verbally pointing out a common purpose, making requests or suggestions, and complying with another's suggestions.

Integrative behavior appears to involve taking the other child's perspective and the kind of reciprocal respect between equals that Piaget sees as eventually producing a mature understanding of social relationships.

It's interesting to note some of Anderson's specific findings: 1) Domination by one child tended to produce dominative behavior in his companion (there was a positive correlation of .68 between a child's dominative score and his companion's). This demonstrates that peer influence

can also be negative. A peer can provide a model of behavior which stimulates non-cooperative actions.

2) A second finding was that integrative behavior on the part of one child led to integrative efforts by his companion. The positive influence of integrative behavior was significantly greater than the negative influence of domination. This finding supports the notion that cooperation develops under conditions of mutual respect.

3) Anderson also found that integrative behavior increased with age, and that the advanced nursery schoolers from superior backgrounds were more integrative than the orphan children. Both findings point to the importance of social experience in developing integrative behavior.

4) Finally, it was found that the same child engaged in both integrative and dominative behavior -- suggesting that although cooperative behavior is present at this age, the moral principle of cooperation is not yet firmly grasped. Piaget maintains that the mutual sympathy and cooperation frequently found among young children becomes truly moral only when it derives from an intellectual belief in the cooperative ethic. This takes longer to develop.

Anderson's study was a step in the right direction -- toward identifying the specific variables at work in a social situation. Another experiment, by a man named Chittenden, carried Anderson's investigation one important step further. Chittenden set out to experimentally change dominative children into cooperative ones, something which Anderson had not tried to do.

As his subjects, Chittenden chose pre-school children who were very dominative in their behavior toward their peers. He gave them a series of training sessions in which dolls were used to play out different social

conflict situations. The experimenter discussed the conflict with the child. They talked about possible ways of responding to it, the consequences of different approaches, and the reactions of the different people involved. Sometimes the child was asked to work out a solution by himself.

The training proved to be highly productive. The participants showed a marked decrease in dominative behavior and an increase in cooperative behavior. The changes were still present in a post-training test a month later.

In cognitive terms, the training produced its effect by helping the initially dominative children to view a social situation from several perspectives other than their own. This helped them to anticipate the consequences of different behaviors. The training sessions also taught them that conflicts can be approached in several ways, and that cooperative approaches are better for all concerned than aggressive ones.

Besides clearly demonstrating that cooperative behavior can be experimentally trained, Chittenden also demonstrated that such changes can be brought about by the intervention of an adult. Piaget, as I've already said, links the development of cooperation to peer experiences, since they provide the child the opportunity for the kind of equal-to-equal interplay that he does not ordinarily experience with adults. The adult can, however, play the role of a peer if he chooses to -- by at least temporarily abandoning his superior position of authority and reasoning with the child on a basis of equality and mutual respect. The free interchange of Chittenden's doll-play discussions appear to meet this requirement.

An interesting variation on Chittenden's experiment would be to set up hypothetical conflict situations using actual children rather than dolls. One child could suggest an approach to the conflict and the other

children would be asked to indicate how they would react to such an approach.

A third, very interesting study involved an effort to experimentally train independent problem-solving in pre-schoolers who initially reacted to new problems by giving up immediately, crying, sulking, etc. For 16 weeks, the experimenter met with each child individually, presenting him with picture puzzle problems of increasing complexity. The experimenter stayed with the child until he completed the puzzle. He gave no direct assistance, but praised all independent efforts to solve the puzzle -- saying such things as "That's fine...you are learning to try hard...you did that one all by yourself." Sometimes the experimenter provided suggestions when the subject got stuck.

During the training, the experimental subjects showed clear and continuous gains in independence and interest in the problems, despite the fact that the problems grew more and more difficult. They requested help less often and persisted longer in their problem-solving efforts than a group of controls given no independence training. The experimental subjects had learned a new and rewarding way of responding to the frustration inherent in solving new problems. They had learned to reduce their frustration or anxiety by continuing to work on the puzzle until solution was achieved.

How can the experiment be viewed as an exercise in social development ? One could say that the experimenter taught the subject a new social role-- the role of an independent achiever. The experimenter communicated to the subject that he, the adult, expected independence and problem-solving from the child. More generally, the experimenter communicated to the child that these are very socially desirable behaviors. He did this by actively encouraging independence and achievement, praising them when they occurred, and withholding reinforcement when they did not. Besides teaching the

child a new role, it can also be said that the training was changing the child's concept of himself. With repeated successes and social reinforcement, the child came to see himself as someone capable of solving problems on his own.

Other studies have also indicated the effectiveness of this combination -- reinforcing desired behaviors and withholding all reinforcement in the face of undesired behaviors. It works better than punishment, which usually doesn't teach the child what to substitute for the punished behavior. The positive reinforcement approach teaches the child what is expected of him, what behaviors will be socially effective and rewarding.

There's another important set of studies which demonstrate that peers influence each other to a great extent as models. The modeling studies have shown that a group of children watching other children behave aggressively will themselves be more aggressive in a later situation than children not exposed to the aggressive models. It's also possible to increase sharing in children by having them observe an altruistic peer model. From a cognitive point of view, models produce their effect on social behavior in essentially the same way as direct reinforcement -- by influencing the child's concept of what is appropriate social behavior in a particular social situation.

How long behaviors acquired through imitation persist is a question for further research. A reasonable hypothesis is that repeated exposure to a given behavior will have long-term effects, especially if the behavior is observed to be rewarding. Other questions for research:
If one observational session doesn't produce a stable behavioral change, how many are required ? To what extent can behavior (say, aggression) acquired from the observation of a model be reversed by subsequent observation of a different model (e.g., a cooperative one)?

A cognitive research program might also investigate what combination of model observation and other learning experiences produce the most stable changes in social behavior.

None of the investigations that I've talked about so far has tried to use the group as a whole to promote social development. Bronfrenbrenner points out that most societies do not consciously use the peer group in the socialization process. One exception is Russia. Bronfrenbrenner, who's been there, reports that a basic social concept in Soviet Russia is that optimal social and character development can be produced only by productive activity within a group.

In the Soviet schools, beginning in the earliest grades, the group is relied upon to motivate both achievement and rule-adherence. Instead of saying to the class -- "All sit up straight" or singling out the slouchers, the Russian teacher is instructed to say, "let's see which row can sit the straightest." The technique is reported to be quite effective.

Rewards and punishments are frequently given on a group basis. Great charts are kept in all the schools asking, "Which unit is best ?" Helping others becomes a matter of enlightened self-interest, since the grade each person gets depends on the overall performance of his unit. Children are frequently praised individually, but for helping their group do well. They are also encouraged to publicly criticize both themselves and their groupmates, and all come to view this as a civic duty, performed without reluctance or discomfort. All of the time the teacher reminds the children why they must be responsible for each other. They must learn to live together as a family, for they will be learning together in school for a long time.

The product of this kind of intensive peer socialization, Bronfrenbrenner

says, is a group-centered child for whom group goals take precedence over individual desires. It's difficult to say to what extent such a child resembles Piaget's concept of the morally autonomous individual. It may be that Soviet socialization includes too much pressure and too little free interchange to develop critical evaluation of group standards and actions according to an internalized ideal of cooperation. But the Russian child at the very least develops a strong sense of accountability to others and a responsibility for their behavior and welfare. An essentially similar pattern of social development is found among the children of the kibbutz settlements in Israel, which from infancy onward minimize the role of the parents and maximize the influence of peers. The conclusion to be reached from such findings is that the peer group can be a powerful shaper of the child's social development.

There is a need for controlled research on the effects of different kinds of peer arrangements. What kinds of group interactions minimize blind or rigid conformity to peer pressures and what kinds of group activity maximize the free exchange of viewpoints and the development of free consent to the ideal of cooperation ? Piaget recommends that schools experiment with something like John Dewey's "group work" system, which allows children to follow their pursuits in common, to freely discuss and experiment together. This would make cooperation an essential factor in intellectual progress. Piaget observes that the present individualistic education system gives the child a good training for competitive examinations, but a poor preparation for cooperative social life.

These are some of the studies on early social development, and a few of the questions which they raise for further research. I'm sure you can think of others. I haven't even touched on variables like the child's sex, or his

ethnic, racial, religious, or socioeconomic background -- all of which produce variation in one or another aspect of social behavior. What I've tried to do is demonstrate the utility of approaching the problem of social development from a cognitive point of view, one which focuses on the changes in the child's social concepts and the social processes which develop his ability to function effectively in his interpersonal world.